



Cowboys

Suggested Post-visit Activities

These activities are tied into the Missouri, Illinois, and national standards for Social Studies and Language Arts.



Lesson Overview

These activities will allow teachers and students to build on information presented during the on-site program and expand their knowledge of the nineteenth century cowboy.

Objectives

Students who participate in these activities will be able to :

- Compare and contrast the mythical cowboy image with the real life cowboy
- Expand their knowledge of the nineteenth century cowboy lifestyle
- Understand how the cowboy trade has changed over the years.

Follow-Up Activities

Have students use the form below to write a Cowboy Position Description based on what you learned about the nineteenth century cowboy while at the Museum of Westward Expansion. Discuss with students how their cowboy position descriptions compare to their original ideas of the western cowboy.

COWBOY POSITION DESCRIPTION

Job Title:

Major Duties:

Required Skills:

Work Area & Conditions:

Expected Accomplishments:

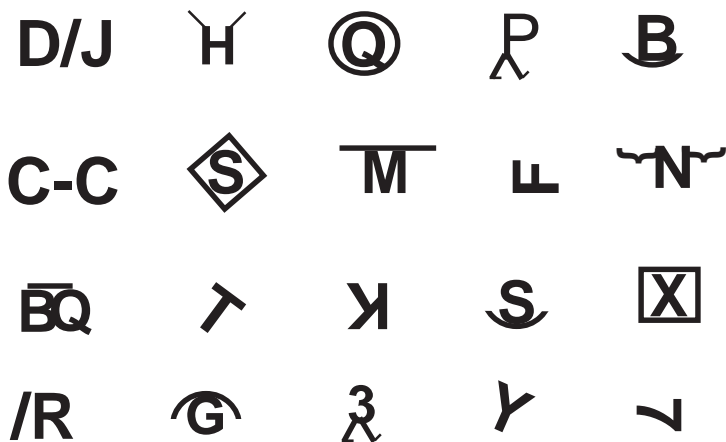
Branding or burning letters, symbols or designs into one's property as a means of identification has been used since ancient times. Since cattle were allowed to roam freely in the West, brands were necessary to separate the herds. One of the first lessons a cowboy learned was to read a brand. While rounding up cattle, he would need to pick out the cattle owned by his ranch. He would do this among as many as one thousand head of cattle.

Using the guidelines, have students try to read the brands below. The answers can be found on the following page. Then have students design their own. Pipe cleaners can be formed into a brand, dipped into poster paint, and stamped on mural paper to make a class display.

Tips for reading brands:

- Brands are read left to right, top to bottom, and outside to inside.
- Letters are always capital letters.
- A letter or number laid on its side is called a lazy letter. For instance, the letter R laying on its side would be read lazy R.
- An upside down letter is read as crazy (upside down A, crazy A).
- Pictures or symbols can be used such as quarter moon, half moon, sun, diamond, triangle, heart which can also be lazy or crazy.
- A short line is read as bar; a longer line is read as rail; "/" is read as slash.
- A box or circle around a number or letter is read box 2
- Number and letters can also rock, fly, walk, swing etc.

Give it a try. Answers are on the following page.



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Answers to Brand Activity

D/J

D Slash J

H

Swinging H

Q

Circle Q

P

Walking P

B

Rocking B

C-C

C Dash C

S

Diamond S

M

Rail M

F

Lazy F

N

Flying N

BQ

Bar B Q

T

Tumbling T

K

Crazy K

S

Rocking S

X

Box X

/R

Slash R

G

Half Moon G

3

Walking 3

Y

Tumbling Y

7

Lazy 7

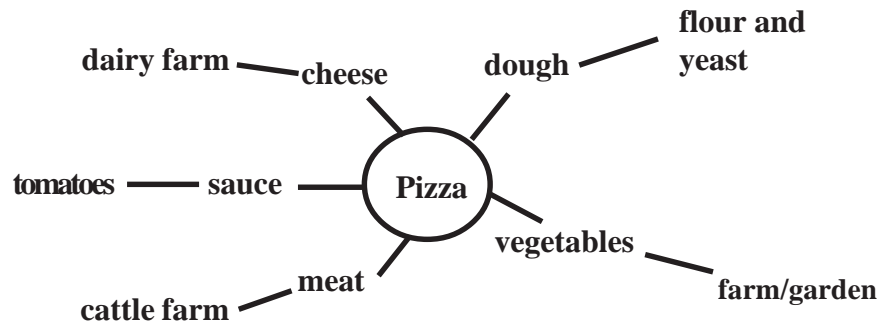
The cowboy cook's day usually started about 3:00 a.m. so everyone could eat before sunrise. It was the cook's job to wake the men so they could wash, dress and be ready to eat. Many of the cooks were known for the way they would call the cowboys to meals. Have students try using one of the calls below. Then challenge them to write their own wake up call.

"Wake up Jacob!
Day's a breakin',
Beans in the pot,
An sourdough a bakin'!"

"Bacon in the pan,
Coffee in the pot,
Get up an'get it,
Get it while it's hot!"

Cattle are considered to have been one of the first animals domesticated by man for agricultural purposes. They were tamed to provide milk, meat and hides and for hauling loads. Today there are over 800 breeds of cattle recognized worldwide. However, breeding animals in captivity is not a clear-cut issue. One view is that animals should be allowed to live in natural conditions reasonably close to those of their wild ancestors. The other side contends animals in captivity are safe from outside pressures like disease and unnatural predators. Have students choose sides and debate the issue.

Just like the nineteenth century northerners imported their beef from the south, much of the food we eat today is imported from hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Have each student write down their favorite food. Then have them map out the different products and processes that came together to produce it. An example is provided below. Begin a discussion about where our favorite foods come from.



Art comes in all forms. Over the years the American cowboy has served as an inspiration for poets, musicians, artists, sculptors, actors, directors, etc. Have students choose a name from the list below and learn about the “artist” and his story. Have students prepare a presentation for the class.

Frederic Remington
Roy Rogers
John Lomax
John Wayne
Gary Cooper
Wm. S. Hart

Charles Russell
Gene Autry
Will Rogers
John Ford
Clint Eastwood
Zane Grey

DJ O’Malley
Tom Mix
Buffalo Bob
Owen Wister
Anthony Mann
Sergio Leone

Modern day cowboys use four wheel drive vehicles and helicopters more often than horses. Cowboys and horses can still be seen, however, at rodeos. Use the Internet or your library to research rodeos like the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo in Kansas City. It is referred to as the “world series of rodeos”. Also search for Bill Pickett. He was a nineteenth century, African American cowboy who invented a technique called “bull dogging” which he performed in numerous rodeos and shows.
